

### How do I get more information about the AHERA requirements?

For copies of the regulations and/or guidance documents, or other related inquiries, you may contact the Toxics Office, Communities & Ecosystems Division at (415) 947-4168. Fax number is (415) 947-3583.

Asbestos information is also available at:  
[www.epa.gov/asbestos](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos)

### EPA Reference Documents

"Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools; Final Rule and Notice", Federal Register, October 30, 1987

"Asbestos-In-Schools: A Guide to New Federal Requirements for Local Educational Agencies", February 1988

"100 Commonly Asked Questions About the New AHERA Asbestos-In-Schools Rule", May 1988

"Guidance for Controlling Asbestos-Containing Materials in Buildings", EPA 560/5-85-024", June 1985

"How to Manage Asbestos in School Buildings, AHERA Designated Person's Self-study Guide", January 1996

"Managing Asbestos in Place. A Building Owner's Guide to Operations and Maintenance Programs for Asbestos-Containing Materials", July 1990

# Asbestos in Schools Program



## A Summary of the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Requirements



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## What is AHERA?

The Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) was enacted in 1986 to require local education agencies (LEAs) to identify asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) in their buildings, develop a management plan, and take appropriate actions to control the release of asbestos fibers.

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral found in certain types of rock formations. The fibers are generally mixed with a binding material so that they can be used in many different products such as floor and ceiling tile, thermal system insulation, acoustical and decorative insulation, and pipe wrap to name a few examples. Asbestos is found in many building materials because it is strong, will not burn, resists corrosion, and insulates well.

## When is asbestos a problem?

Asbestos is a known carcinogen (cancer-causing). The inhalation of asbestos fibers has been linked with asbestosis (scarring of lungs), lung cancer, and mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the chest or abdominal cavity). However, the mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is endangered. Intact, properly maintained, and undisturbed ACBM do not generally pose a health risk.

These materials can pose a hazard when, due to damage or deterioration over time, the fibers are released and become airborne. If the fibers are inhaled, they can lead to health problems.



## What schools are subject to AHERA?








Public and private nonprofit elementary and secondary schools are required to comply with the AHERA regulations.

## What buildings are subject to AHERA?

Any school building owned or leased by the LEA is subject to the regulations. In general, the term "school building" includes structures suitable for use as classrooms (e.g. portables), laboratories, libraries, school eating and kitchen facilities, gymnasiums, administrative offices, student dormitories, and any maintenance, storage, or utility facility. Buildings constructed after October 12, 1988 and without the use of ACBM are excluded from some requirements but LEAs are still required to maintain a management plan, appoint a designated person, and make annual notifications.

## What are the major elements of these regulations?

-  Appoint a designated person who is trained to oversee asbestos activities and ensure compliance with AHERA.
-  Use accredited persons to conduct inspections, reinspections, develop management plans, develop project designs, and conduct abatement activities.

-  Conduct initial inspections using accredited inspectors to determine if ACBM is present. If present, the condition must be assessed by the inspector
-  Develop a management plan to address the ACBM found in the school building(s).
-  Implement appropriate response actions in a timely manner. The response action selected must protect human health and the environment
-  Conduct a periodic surveillance every six months to check for changes in the condition of ACBM.
-  Conduct a reinspection at least once every three years along with a reassessment.
-  Assure proper training and awareness of maintenance and custodial staff.
-  Maintain records. The management plan must be updated with records of relevant events and activities

## Who can review the management plan?

The management plan must be made available for inspection to representatives of EPA and the State, the general public, parents, teachers, and other school personnel and their representatives. The LEA must keep an updated copy of the management plan in its administrative office for each school under its administrative control or direction. Each school must have a copy of its own updated management plan as well.